

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 7, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are concerned that the Department of Defense has been under-reporting casualties in Iraq by only reporting non-fatal casualties incurred in combat. We write today to request that you provide the American people with a full accounting of the American casualties in Iraq since the March 19, 2003 invasion, including a full accounting of the fatalities, the wounded, those who have contracted illnesses during their time overseas, and those suffering from mental afflictions as a result of their service in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. We are concerned that the figures that were released to the public by your Administration do not accurately represent the true toll that this war has taken on the American people.

On November 21, 2004, CBS' 60 Minutes led its program with a segment on the subject of uncounted "non-combat" casualties. They interviewed badly injured soldiers who were upset by their being excluded from the official count, even though they were, in one soldier's words, "in hostile territory...". The Pentagon declined to be interviewed, instead sending a letter that contained information not included in published casualty reports. "More than 15,000 troops with so-called 'non-battle' injuries and diseases have been evacuated from Iraq," wrote the Department of Defense. John Pike, Director of GlobalSecurity.org told 60 Minutes in that segment that this uncounted casualty figure "would have to be somewhere in the ballpark of over 20, maybe 30,000".

As you know, more than one in four U.S. troops have come home from the Iraq war with health problems that require medical or mental health treatment.¹ Thus, with more than 300,000 troops having served in Iraq, this amounts to at least 50,000 cases of mental trauma.² Moreover, 101,000 of the 431,000 troops who have returned home from service in Iraq and Afghanistan and

¹Gregg Zoroya, *1 in 4 Iraq Vets Ailing on Return*, USA TODAY, Oct. 18, 2005. The article notes that these results have not been publicly released, but were provided to USA TODAY by the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.

²*Id.*

who have separated from the military, have sought help.³ This figure shows the Pentagon's official Iraq casualty count of 2,082 U.S. troops killed, and 15,477 wounded as of today, to be inaccurate by several multiples.⁴ What we cannot understand is why you are only reporting the total American casualty figure at just over 15,000⁵ when you know that this figure is not an accurate representation of the facts and does not represent the entire picture of American lives affected by the war. We also need to understand where your numbers are coming from and how you arrived at them given the facts and data that has been released from the Pentagon.

Based on the data that have been released by your Administration and the unofficial data that are coming out of the Pentagon, what we can be certain of is that at least tens of thousands of young men and women have been physically or psychologically damaged for life. To be exact, the figure ranges somewhere between 15,000 and 101,000 today. This is a staggering range of casualties by any standard, as these casualties will affect the lives of at least hundreds of thousands of family members and others. We cannot emphasize enough how important it is that we understand the gravity of the situation that we are faced with.

Since the March 2003 invasion, our troops have been dying at a rate of about 800 a year, with most killed in action by crude but powerful roadside bombs.⁶ More than 90 percent of the deaths have come after you declared an end to "major combat operations" on May 1, 2003.⁷ Moreover, the Pentagon reports that of the service members returning from the Iraq war this year, 47 percent saw someone wounded or killed, or saw a dead body.⁸ This is no small matter that can be downplayed by superficial reassurances designed to temporarily assuage the uneasiness of the American public. The effects of this war will remain for many years to come and each and every one of us will have to cope with it.

³*Id.*

⁴U.S. Department of Defense Daily Report on U.S. Casualties of War, found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>.

⁵*Id.*

⁶Josh White and Ann Scott Tyson, *Military Has Lost 2,000 in Iraq*, THE WASHINGTON POST, Oct. 26, 2005; A01.

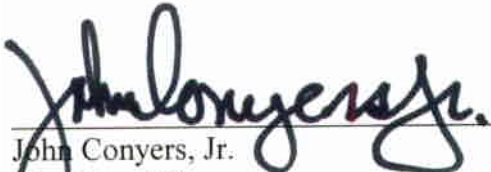
⁷*Id.*

⁸193,131 Defense Department Post-Deployment Health Assessments from January 2005 through August 2005.

The Honorable George W. Bush
Page Three
December 7, 2005

The American people have sacrificed a great deal as a result of this war and they deserve to know what you know. Those who have sacrificed deserve to know that their sacrifice counted and that their service abroad was as recognizable as that of our fallen soldiers. Further, the failure of your Administration to acknowledge the loss of Iraqi lives prevents the American people from having a complete picture of the cost of this war. We urge you to honor your duty as our Commander-in-Chief to keep the American people regularly informed of the true human cost of the Iraq War.

Sincerely,




John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress



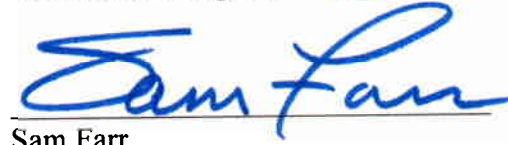
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Janice Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress